A NEW NARRATIVE OF A Fiery Apparition

Seen on ſeveral days about TOWER-HILL.

OR, A JUST

RELATION

Of the unjuſt Proceedings of

Mr. *Sherman*, Church-Warden of *All-hallows Barkin*, *London*.

By JONATHAN SANDERS, Lecturer of the ſaid Church.

OF Late the Common Prints have made a great pother about an Image erected in the Pariſh-Church of *All-hallows Barkin*, *London*, which Image was indited at the laſt Seſſions at the *Old Baily*. The upper Church-Warden without advice, and contrary to Order, was pleaſed to plead Guilty; how far he may be concerned in the Guilt I am not to enquire, but ſince the proceeding may have afforded matter of Scandal to ſome diſtant perſons, I thought it was my duty to give ſome brief Account of the whole matter, which is as followeth.

On Sunday, *March* the Sixth, Mr. *Sherman* acquainted Dr. *Hicks*, and my Self, that there was an Inditement prefer'd at the *Old Baily* againſt the Church-Wardens for ſuffering an Image in the Church, not making any mention that the Doctor, or my Self, were concerned in the Inditement, though a Copy of it had been given him for that very purpoſe.

On Monday, the Seventh inſtant, Mr. *Sherman* took down from the Eaſt end of the Church the (pretended) Figure of the Archangel St. *Michael*,

by the assistance of the Clerk and Sexton, against the advice of the Doctor, and without the Knowledge or Consent of the Vestry.

He carried it on the same day to the Sessions-house in the *Old-Baily*, and did (singly) plead Guilty to the Inditement; of which the Court took so little Notice that they would not accept his Fine.

This (pretendedly) superstitious Image was brought back the same Night, continued in the Church all Tuesday, and conveyed thence on Wednesday. When Mr. *Sherman* being asked how he had disposed of the same, and by what order, he replied, That he had sent it to Mr. Sheriff *Bethel* by order of the Court.

On the Sunday following it was intended there should be a Vestry, which accordingly was called, in the Name of the Doctor, Mr. *Sherman* having given Order to the Clerk not to use the Name of the Church-Wardens.

After Sermon, the Vestry being Assembled, Mr. *Sherman* refused to take his place as Church-Warden, telling them that the Poor wanted no Money, and that if in any thing he wanted their advice, he would call them when he thought fit; adding withall, That the Doctor had no power to hold a Vestry without him, therefore he would not stay any longer, but told them (imperiously enough) that he dissolved them.

The Vestry, notwithstanding this huffe, Sat and made some Orders, but they were no sooner broke up but Mr. *Sherman* returned to the Church from his own House with a part of (his God-son St. *Michael*) the Image, which with some vain-glory he burnt in the Vestry.

On the Sunday following he caused another part to be laid on the Fire before Evening-Prayer. And whereas he then burnt a Wing of the Angel, affirming, that neither the Pope nor St. *Peter* should have any piece of it; so after Sermon, before all the Gentlemen of the Vestry then present, he pull'd some part of the Feet of it out of his Pocket, telling them, That as it could not fly, so neither should it walk to *Rome*.

But the Poor innocent Figure could not escape thus, for on the Sunday following, *viz.* *March* the the 27*th*. he brought some other pieces of it into the Vestry before Evening-Prayer, and burnt them in the presence of Mr. *Tomlyn*, one of the Vestry, who seriously asking him what he meant by so doing, Mr. *Sherman* replied, That he would not suffer any part of the Image to remain. All of these are most significant Expressions of zeal against *Popery*.

This is clearly the state of the Affair as it hath been gradually carried on.

Now any one that hears of all this, together with the Confession of the guilty Church-Warden, might be induced to think there were some great matter at the bottom of such an Eminent proceeding.

Without doubt it hath made a great Noise not only in the City of *London*, but also in places more remote whither the News of it hath been industriously carried for the Example of all other Church-Wardens, who, by one of our *London* Scriblers of Sedition, are advised to tread in the Steps of this worthy Gentleman. People are hereby made to believe that *Popery* is coming in apace among us, and that it must have its first entrance at *All-hallows Barkin*.

But to prevent any such mistake, it is requisite that they who take the trouble of reading this Paper would seriously consider these few necessary Additions that I am to make.

I. This Image (as they call it) was not a thing erected of late, but set up

up in the Year 1658. or thereabout, and had no relation but to the Two Figures of *Death* and *Time*, betwixt which it might handſomly enough ſtand with its Trumpet and Motto, to mind Men of the laſt Judgment. It is ſtrange that no body could diſcover either the thing it ſelf, or the miſchief of it, till 1680. But the Wiſe-man tells us their is a Time for all things, and it is the good luck of our diſcerning Church-Warden to hit it.

II. This Figure was ſo far from having any reſpect or veneration paid to it, that few or none of the Inhabitants took any notice of it; and had the Doctor, or Lecturer, been asked Two or Three weeks before this buſtle, where it ſtood, I dare confidently pronounce they had been to ſeek for an anſwer.

But this alſo was the happy diſcovery of the Church-Warden, who knew when it was fit to prefer an Inditement, and hath the good fortune to know the Critical Time of One Year in Ten, when a thing is done *pravæ mentis*, and when a Man bows to an Idol under the colour of adoring his God. Yet I muſt be ſo juſt to the Gentleman, as to proteſt that I don't think that in his own Conſcience he believes that any of us had this Image under any religious Conſideration; and if he fails here, as moſt diſingeniouſly he doth, it is not to paſs for a failure in his Underſtanding, but for a voluntary, a deſigned, and a malicious Prevarication.

'Tis poſſible he may pleaſe himſelf with the delightfull apprehenſion of gratifying ſome one party of men; but then he ought to remember, that he that ſells his Neighbor's Fame for a little unſavory popular Breath, will in the concluſion gain nothing but Infamy and Diſgrace.

Every ſober Man will allow the liberty of ſaying this, when he may know that there is not a more ſerious and regularly-devout Pariſh in the City of *London* than this of *All-hallows Barkin* is: And when they ſhall be expoſed to the cenſure of the World as Popiſhly-affected, 'tis not only an ill thing, but it is an ill ſign; 'tis a token that ſome among us are either ignorantly, or cunningly, running into that *Popery* which they pretend to hate and fear.

This is the mighty Engine that carries on the buſineſs of the Jeſuits, and other Papiſts at this time; for if men can at pleaſure take away the reputation and honour of the Church of *England*, then the *Romiſh* Faction have gained the Field, and have no more to doe but to ſit down and divide the Spoil. Yet ſo it is, we are fallen among a generation of things (whom I was going to call Men) which call every Man Papiſt, and every thing Popiſh, which doth not juſt jump with their little ſelf-conceited Moddels. And this Courſe is ſo irrational and abſurd, as well as irreligious, that I can ſee no reaſon for it, unleſs it be that theſe pretended Proteſtant-zealots carry on the ſame deſign with the Papiſts, and intend to ſhare with them at laſt, as the late *Lambert* who aimed at the Protectorſhip, proves ſince to be a known Papiſt, as Mr. *Oats* informs us.

III. 'Tis pretended that this Figure was Condemned by the Court at the *Old Baily*: A ſuggeſtion as far from truth, as the God-father was from the right Name of his Child. It may ſeem ſtrange that the Church-Warden ſhould pretend an order of Court when there was none, and when Sir *George Treby* the Recorder declared, that the proceeding was not grounded upon any Law that he knew of.

Yet ſuch is the inſolence of ſome Men, that they dare lay their ill-favor'd

Brats at whoſe door they pleaſe. In the mean time the Miniſters and Pariſhioners of *All-hallows Barkin* have this Comfort, That they are ſlandered and indited by none but thoſe that have the Confidence to act by ſuch Orders as they never received.

This I tender to the publick as an impartial Account of what hath paſſed ſince this buſineſs came upon the Stage; I could have wiſhed with all my heart that the thing had made no noiſe abroad, but ſince it hath taken air, I thought it requiſite that the honeſt Apology ſhould be as open as the unjuſt Slander.

I know how unhandſome it is to interrupt Men of buſineſs with little particular Concerns of our own, and I very well underſtand that Liberty of Conſcience, and Liberty of the Preſs, are things that have an unhappy influence upon the Nation; and therefore as I am no Friend (in the preſent wild Notion) to the one, ſo I ſhould hardly have been Guilty of uſing the other, had there not been this too juſt occaſion for it.

If this ſhort Relation have not its wiſhed effect in giving ſatisfaction to any that are honeſtly jealous, I ſhall give e're long a fuller Account, ſuch as may clear us from any ſuſpicion of *Popery* that may lurk in any credulous and unwary Breaſt; in the mean time here is

THE END.